

instances, mostly well known, of this kind of relation, the book seems to shed little fresh light on the problem of evolution.

L. DONCASTER.

Haldane, J. S., M.D., LL.D., F.R.S. *Mechanism, Life, and Personality: An Examination of the Mechanistic Theory of Life and Mind.* London. John Murray; 1913; price 2s. 6d.; pp. 139.

IN this book of four lectures delivered last May at Guy's Hospital, Dr. Haldane has developed, in a remarkably attractive and assimilable form, his views on a subject of unfailing interest. Commencing with a fair and lucid exposition of the mechanistic hypothesis of living organisms and the physiological observations upon which this hypothesis is founded, he discusses more superficially the objections raised in favour of vitalism, only to reject this alternative hypothesis as "unproved, unintelligible, and practically useless as a scientific working hypothesis."

On such a clear and tangible foundation it is a little disappointing to find that the mechanistic hypothesis is rejected on no better ground than that of the extreme complexity of the intracellular mechanisms required for the ordinary functions of cell life, and for heredity; in view of our ignorance of the possibilities of molecular structure, such a conclusion would seem to be somewhat presumptuous. Moreover, when we look further for an alternative hypothesis, we are merely frustrated by a philosophical discussion on the reality of the phenomenal universe, and a not very relevant presentation of idealism.

That there is nothing in the mechanistic hypothesis which is inconsistent with the purest idealism must be familiar to all students of Huxley; and we imagine that Hume would have particularly resented the assertion (p. 74) that he had proved the world of matter to be non-existent. Nor does it help matters to place organic beings in a special category; if the physicist is right in attempting to express the relations between physical quantities in terms of mathematical symbols, although the symbols are avowedly not physical quantities, the physiologist is equally right in explaining physiological mechanisms, even the most obscure and intricate, in terms of physics and chemistry.

It is, indeed, to be regretted that Dr. Haldane, in developing speculations of great philosophical interest, should have founded them, in appearance, upon the supposed inadequacy of the mechanistic theory; for not only does he fail to establish this inadequacy, but there remains between the physiological and the philosophical portions of his reasoning an unbridged gap in an argument, which in other respects he has taken pains to make complete.

Unquestionably the best lecture of the four, both from the literary and from the scientific point of view, is the last, entitled "Personality." Here, in a purely philosophical region, the author develops the consequences of the thesis that the phenomenal world is a product of personality; and in particular of the personality of an organism, itself adapted to its environment. The conception bristles with paradoxes, and it is only by appealing to an ultimate unity in the universe of personality that it is possible to escape from the sophistry of "racial solempnism"; nevertheless, it is by powerful reasoning as well as by brilliant creative thought that we are led to the conclusion, that "This world and all that lies within it is a spiritual world."

R. A. FISHER.

Dealey, JAMES QUAYLE. *The Family in Its Sociological Aspects.* London. G. G. Harrap and Co.; 1913; price 1s. 6d. net; pp. 137.

THIS little book does singularly little justice to its title. The first seven chapters comprise a somewhat poor and unconvincing historical outline, culminating in the modern family of American democracy.

"It is possible, therefore, to get a much clearer idea of the modern family, in its later aspects at least, from a study of the American family